
CGMB534 Game Design

*Chapter 3:
Game Concepts*

Objectives

- Take a game idea and add the necessary material to make it into a design concept
- Define the player's role or roles in the game
- Know the different genres of games and think about which one your game may belong to

Objectives (Cont.)

- Know how to choose a target audience and understand the special considerations associated with designing for specialized markets
- Plan the progress of your game
- Understand the differences among the kinds of game machines and how these differences affect the way people play on them

Getting an Idea

- You can find game ideas anywhere
 - Dreams of doing something or achieving a goal
 - From media such as books or movies
 - From other games
- When evaluating ideas, remember that the game must provide entertainment

From Idea to Game Concept

- A game concept is a description with enough detail to discuss it as a commercial product
- A game concept should include:
 - High concept statement
 - Player's role in the game
 - Proposed primary gameplay mode
 - Genre
 - Target audience
 - Hardware
 - Licenses
 - Competition modes
 - General summary of progression
 - Short description of the game world
 - Key characters, if any

The Player's Role

- Define the role
 - What is the player going to do?
 - Most important part of the game concept
- Make the definition clear and simple
 - Help the player understand the goals and rules
 - Help publisher, retailer, and customer decide to buy the game

Choosing a Genre

- A genre is a category of games characterized by a particular set of challenges, regardless of setting or game-world content
- Many players buy a particular genre because they like the type of challenges it offers

Classic Game Genres

- Action games—physical challenges
- Strategy games—strategic, tactical, and logistical challenges
- Role-playing games—tactical, logistical, exploration, and economic challenges
- Real-world simulations (sports games and vehicle simulations) —physical and tactical challenges

Classic Game Genres (Cont.)

- Construction and management games—economic and conceptual challenges
- Adventure games—exploration and puzzle-solving challenges
- Puzzle games—logic and conceptual challenges

Hybrid Games

- Games that cross genres
- Risky because it might alienate some of your target audience
- The most successful hybrid is the action-adventure
 - Mostly action
 - Include a story and puzzles that give them some of the quality of adventure games

Defining Your Target Audience

- Who will buy the game?
- The representative player is a member of your target audience

The Dangers of Binary Thinking

- Binary thinking—assumes that if group A likes a thing, everyone outside that group WON'T like it
- Interests overlap among groups
- Avoid exclusionary material

The Dangers of Binary Thinking (Cont.)

- Core versus casual—the most significant method of grouping players
- Other groups that exhibit trends in game-playing preferences:
 - Men and women
 - Children and adults
 - Boys and girls
 - Players with disabilities
 - Players of other cultures

Progression Considerations

- Players need to feel they are making progress when playing long games
- Progress can be implemented through
 - Levels
 - Story
 - Both

Types of Game Machines

- Home game consoles
 - Simple, bold graphics
 - Standard controller
 - Excellent for multiplayer games
 - Slower computing and less storage space than a personal computer

Types of Game Machines (Cont.)

- Personal computer
 - Keyboard, mouse, joystick
 - High-resolution graphics
 - Intended for a single user
 - Internet connection is common
 - License or special equipment not needed for game development
 - No standard configuration

Types of Game Machines (Cont.)

- Handheld game machines
 - Very popular and inexpensive
 - Fewer control mechanisms
 - Small LCD screen
 - Less storage space than a personal computer

Types of Game Machines (Cont.)

- Mobile phones and wireless devices
 - Little memory or processing power
 - No standard specifications
 - Can provide portable networked play
 - License not required for game development

Types of Game Machines (Cont.)

- Other devices
 - Personal digital assistants
 - Video gambling machines
 - Arcade machines

Summary

- You should now understand
 - Defining a game concept
 - Creating a high concept document
 - Defining the player's role
 - Identifying game genres
 - Choosing the target audience
 - Selecting the game machine